

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 IO-11 AF-06 OPIC-03 /080 W

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P R 171736Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5008

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

US MISSION NATO 817

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO RUMORS OF CABINET MINI-CRISIS

1. OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS THE DAILY PRESS HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT EXERCIZED OVER THE CONTINUING RUMORS OF A GOVT MINI-CRISIS INVOLVING A CHANGE IN THE CABINET BUT HAS EDITORIALIZED DISPASSIONATELY.

2. "ABC" (MONARCHIST) ASKED TWO QUESTIONS: DO VALID REASONS ACTUALLY EXIST FOR A GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE THAT IS, HAS THE PRESENT GOVT WORKED ITSELF INTO A CORNER AND, WILL A

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GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE SOLVE PROBLEMS WHICH ACTUALLY ARISE FROM

THE "SPONTANEOUS ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL GROUPS"? IN ANY CASE, SO LONG AS THE GOVT, DUE TO THE LACK OF A REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATURE, DOES NOT REFLECT A POLITICAL MAJORITY, THEN A CHANGE OF GOVT WILL SOLVE LITTLE.

3. THE LEAD COMMENTARY IN "ARRIBA" (NATIONAL MOVEMENT) TREATED THE RUMORS LIGHTHEARTEDLY: "AT TIMES, THE RUMOR OF A CRISIS IS A TYPE OF PUBLIC GOAD TO KEEP THE PUBLIC SEAT FROM BEING TOO COMFORTABLE." IT SAID AS WELL THAT SINCE THE PRESENT GOVT IS NOT YET A GOVT RESPONSIVE TO A REPRESENTATIVELY ELECTED MAJORITY BUT A GOVT OF PERSONALITIES, A CHANGE IN GOVT WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE.

4. IN "YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT) THE LEADING POLITICAL COLUMNIST LUIS APOSTUA POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE MANY RUMORS ABOUT ARIAS STEPPING DOWN, BUT LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE REAL QUESTION OF WHO WOULD REPLACE HIM. HE JUDGED THAT THE ELEMENT OF AN ALTERNATE WAS LACKING.

5. IN RESPECT OF THE CABINET SITUATION ITSELF, THE WORD WAS PASSED TO THE PRESS LAST NIGHT THAT ARIAS WOULD BE STATING ON AND THAT THERE WAS NO CRISIS. (A SOURCE IN THE PRIME MINISTRY CONFIRMS TO US THAT THE MOMENT OF IMMEDIATE TENSION HAS PASSED). THIS EVENING'S PRESS CARRIES A STORY, SOURCED TO WELL PLACED FIGURES. THAT THE CONVERSATION OF ARIAS WITH THE KING LAST FRIDAY HAS RESULTED IN A DECISION TO ACCELERATE REFORMS, INCLUDING IN THE KEY LABOR SPHERE, AND PERHAPS MOVE UP TO THE TIME TABLE FOR REFERENDUM.

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